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*Victory over Death a Ground of Thank-
fulness to God through Jesus Christ.*

130
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

PINNERS-HALL,

JANUARY 31, 1731. *at 7*

Occasioned by the Death of

Thomas Hollis, *Esq;*

By JEREMIAH HUNT, D.D. *X*

L O N D O N:

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277

They are Dead a Ground of Thank
Praise to God through Jesus Christ.

A

SERMON

Preached at

PINNEY'S-HALL



JANUARY 31 1770

Occasioned by the Death of

Thomas Hollis Esq;

By JEREMIAH HUNT, D.D.

Printed for T. Cadell, at the Book, under the

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T O

Mr. Nathaniel Hollis, } *ob. 1738*
Mr. John Hollis, } Brothers,

A N D

Mr. Thomas Hollis, Nephew,
only Son of the above Nathaniel.
ob. Dec 1735.
Of the late Deceased

Thomas Hollis, *Esq;*

The following

D I S C O U R S E,

Is, with all due Respect, Dedicated,

By their affectionate Friend,

And humble Servant,

JEREMIAH HUNT.

JEREMIAH HUNT.

And humble Servant,

By their affectionate Friend,

Is, with all due Respect, Dedicated,

DISCOURSE,

The following

Thomas Hollis, Esq;

Of the
MUSEUM
Dedicated



Mr. Thomas Hollis, Nephew,

AND

Mr. John Hollis,

Mr. Nathaniel Hollis, Brothers,

I COR. XV. 56, 57.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.

AT the time when the apostle wrote this epistle, there were some at Corinth, who deny'd the resurrection of the dead¹. This occasions his reminding them of the gospel he had preached to them, and they had receiv'd, whereby they were brought into a state of salvation, and would certainly attain it, if they held fast and retain'd what he had deliver'd unto them; unless they had believ'd in vain, i. e. without the proper effect of true faith²; a sincere, and persevering course of obedience³. *For I deliver'd unto you, a-*

¹ Ver. 12. ² Ver. 2. ³ Ver. 3.

mong the principal articles of the Christian Doctrine, *that which also I receiv'd, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*¹. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection, if this doctrine of a resurrection be absurd, and impossible, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain: the preaching of us the apostles, who are witnesses of his resurrection, and sent to declare that though the Jews crucify'd him; yet God rais'd him up, and exalted him to his right hand, and by him imparted extraordinary gifts of the spirit to us, thereby enabling us to communicate, and establish his doctrine: in consequence of which, *your faith also is vain, upon the supposition that Christ is not risen*². Yea, and we [apostles] are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he rais'd up Christ, whom he raised not up, if the dead rise not. And the consequence of this is, *that your faith is vain, that is, fruitless and ineffectual*

¹ Ver. 12.² Ver. 15.

to justification of life, *ye are yet in your sins*; liable to the same condemnation which others are, to whom the gospel has never been preach'd; *and they also who are fallen asleep in Christ, are perish'd*, in like manner lost and undone. And if we make the comparison in reference to the present enjoyments of this life, we especially who are apostles, and so expos'd to remarkable sufferings for christianity, *are of all men most miserable*¹. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept; the earnest of their resurrection. ²*Else what shall they do who are baptiz'd*³, and so make a publick profession of the christian doctrine, which exposes them to persecution, *for the dead*, to supply the place of those who are fallen asleep in Christ, *if the dead arise not?* And why stand we, in particular who are apostles, *in jeopardy every hour*, for the sake of a doctrine, that gives us the hope of a happy resurrection, if there be no resurrection at all? The apostle then introduces an objection, *How are the dead raised up?* And with what body do they come? to which he replies, that the bodies of the risen saints shall be chang'd⁵; which

¹ Ver. 19. ² Ver. 29. ³ Vid. Fortuita sacra. ⁴ Ver. 35. ⁵ Ver. 51:

he founds upon the inconsistency that there is, that flesh and blood should inherit the kingdom of God. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* And from thence he is led to declare, that since some might be alive at the resurrection of the saints, that such shall be chang'd: which is represented as a mystery; because it was not before reveal'd¹. *Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be chang'd in a moment. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be fulfilled, in the highest and most compleat sense, the saying that is written, death is swallow'd up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* When from a strong view that the apostle had of the happiness of the risen saints, in that they were incorruptible, and immortal, he had triumph'd in an elegant manner over death, and the grave; addressing to them in the words of the prophet, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* He obviates a difficulty that might arise, especially when he

¹ Ver. 51, 53, 54.² Hof. xiii, 14.

had in his mind the bright scene of the sons of the resurrection, cloath'd with glory, and immortality; How should death, our formidable enemy, have ever had an original? What gave rise to it? Whence did it receive its strength? Which melancholy history he traces through all the dispensations of God, to the time when Christ gain'd the victory. *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In discoursing upon these words, I shall observe the following method.

- I. Explain what we are to understand by the expression ; *The sting of death is sin.*
- II. Shew you how the *law is the strength of sin.*
- III. Consider *the victory that God hath given us through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- IV. Evince that this is a just foundation of offering our thanks to him. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. To explain what is meant by this expression, *The sting of death is sin.*

The apostle seems here to represent death as a person, in the same manner as he does sin, in his epistle to the *Romans*¹. And when he had before describ'd it as an enemy, what image could he more properly make use of than of a scorpion, whose sting is the instrument of mischief, to paint the wide, and extensive destruction that death hath occasion'd,

The meaning therefore of the apostle in these words, *the sting of death is sin*, may be, that sin has given rise to death, which is our enemy, and the last that is to be destroy'd; it is sin by which death has obtain'd an universal influence, and dominion over mankind. The truth of this is evident from clear and undoubted passages of scripture². *Wherefore, as by one man sin enter'd into the world, and death by sin; and so death pass'd upon all men, for that all have sin'd.* The sentence is not compleat, till the apostle takes it up again in the 21st verse, *That*

¹ *Gb.* vi. 20.

¹ *Cor.* xv. 26.

² *Rom.* 5. 12.

as sin has reign'd unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. When this writer says, *and so death pass'd upon all men, for that all have sinn'd*, it might have been render'd, *through whom all have sin'd*, which is in the 19th verse express'd differently: *for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, i. e. treated as if they had all offended against a law that expressly threatned death; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, that is, dealt with as if they had never transgress'd such a law: and so the meaning is much the same with what he says in the 21 and 22. verses of this chapter. *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in, or [thro'] Adam all die, even so in, or [thro'] Christ shall all be made alive.* That thro' Adam all have sin'd, and been made sinners in this sense, that they have been treated in the same manner, as they would have been liable to, if they had violated a law, which expressly threatned death; and that this is the meaning of the apostle here, will be fully evident by the following verses. *For until the law sin, consisting in what is contrary to reason, and fitness of things, was in the world;*

world; but sin is not imputed, reckon'd, or rated, when there is no law which has an exprefs threatning of death annex'd to it. Nevertheless death reign'd from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not finned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, in acting contrary to a law to which was affix'd the exprefs sanction of death, as was the case of Adam: in the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die, who is the figure of him that was to come. The analogy and resemblance that there is between them, the author gives us in many particulars in the following verses; which, since the pursuing of them would carry me too far from the subject, that I am at present insisting on, I shall decline considering.

It is undeniably evident, from the passage, which I have cited, that it is by sin that death has been introduced, and has obtain'd so general, and universal an empire over men. To which we may add others¹. *For if through the offence of one, many be dead, For if by one man's offence, death reign'd by one. That as sin hath reign'd unto death². For the wages of sin is death.* And though it

¹ Rom v. 15. *ὁ ἅμαρτος*, 17, 21: ² Rom. vi. 23.

should be supposed that the frame or make of *Adam* was in it self frail, and dissoluble; it would not at all follow, that he would have died if he had not sinn'd; the contrary seeming to be imply'd in the threatning, *in the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die.* And 'tis not improbable, that *Adam* might have a vestment of glory, as a pledge of his immortality during his innocence, of which he should be depriv'd upon his eating the forbidden fruit.

The sting of death is sin. Sin is not only the parent of death; but it is that, by which men are detain'd under its empire; it is that which gives to death a right of dominion. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh,* by his wicked instruments to apprehend and destroy me, *and hath nothing in me*¹, to give him, or death a claim of right; *but that the world may know, that I love the father, and as the father gave me command, even so I do willingly submit myself to be put to death.* Having thus explain'd the phrase, *sin the sting of death*², I come to the second head.

¹ *John* xiv. 30. ² Το δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐδὲν ὃ ἐκείνῳ ἡ ἀνάγκη.

II. To shew you how the law is the strength of sin.

By the term 'law here, we are to understand the law of *Moses*, which I would not so much argue from the article which is prefix'd [ὁ νόμος] as from several texts, in which this writer gives fully, and distinctly his own sense. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath¹. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them, who are under the law, that every mouth may be stop'd, and all the world, Jews, as well as others, may become guilty before God², liable to his wrath, and punishment, who by the law has made known what is sin, and what penalty he has annex'd to it. For where no law is, with a sanction annex'd, there is no transgression³, that is such, as draws on the transgressor the punishment settled, and ratified by the expresse sanction. This may give light to the words of the apostle; when he says, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men,*

¹ Rom. iv. 14, 15. ² Ibid. iii. 19. ὁ νόμος subject to the judgment of God, πᾶς ὁ νόμος οὗ δαίμονος; ³ Hos. xiii. 14. Septuag:

Gentiles as well as Jews¹. Moreover the law of Moses enter'd that the offence², to which death was annex'd by positive sanction, might abound, and sins that had death for their punishment might be increased. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members³: or as the words may be better render'd, sinful affections during the law wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. What shall we say then, is the law sin that we should be deliver'd from it? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, in such extent but by the law. For sin, which by this writer is represented as a person, taking occasion by the commandment that had attending it the threatning of death, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them⁴, exerts a greater force to slay and kill. For I was alive without the law once or before the law was given. But when the commandment, which threatned death to every transgression came, or was enacted, sin reviv'd, had greater vigour and strength, and I died, and the commandment, which was ordain'd to life, giving a promise, that the man that doth the things contain'd therein per-

¹ Rom i. 18.² Rom. v. 13, 20.³ Rom. vii. 5, 8, 13;⁴ Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxvii. 26.

fectly and steadily shall live by them, I found to be death unto me. In these passages, the apostle with great clearness gives us his sense, and we may easily by them settle the meaning of these words, *and the strength of sin is the law.* That as death came by sin ; so the law of *Moses* by expressly threatening death to every violation of its commands, gives greater strength, and force to sin to slay and kill. I come now,

III. To consider the victory that God has given us through our *Lord Jesus Christ.*

According to the primary sense of the word *victory*, there is a plain and undoubted reference to death, and the grave. This appears from the apostle's styling death our *enemy*, and the numberless trophies of conquest, that it had gain'd over men¹. In the song of triumph, into which the apostle breaks out in the words, which immediately preceed ; *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* the same word is us'd, which is made use of here: *But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory.* And, which farther confirms this interpre-

¹ *Ver. 26.*

tation, when he speaks of the law as the strength of sin, 'tis on the account of the sanction of death, which was threaten'd to the violation of any of its precepts. From all which circumstances it appears clear, that *victory* in our text, must primarily mean a victory over death by a resurrection to life: but since the christian religion makes a victory over sin, which is the cause of our dying, necessary to a glorious and happy resurrection; and the doctrine of Christ, as it impowers us to obtain this conquest, is represented more excellent than the law of *Moses*, which bound death straiter upon those who were under it; this sense may (though more remotely) yet very reasonably be included.

Thanks be to *God*; that is the Father. To him is ascrib'd the contrivance of the entire scheme of our recovery, and salvation. *But after that the kindness, and love of God our Saviour toward man appear'd, not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*¹. And *that the kindness, and love*

¹ Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6.

of God our Saviour, in verse 4th refer to the Father, is clear and evident from the following words : *Which [Holy Ghost] he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour*¹. On this account it is, that the dispensation of the gospel is stil'd the *grace of God*. To the Father is attributed the preparation of the body, which he who is represented in the character of our Saviour, assum'd. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me*². The Father sanctify'd, and sent him. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctify'd and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God*³—The Father himself which hath sent me, hath born witness of me⁴. The mission of the Son of God, the Messiah, and gracious message that he came to deliver, are ascrib'd to the love of the Father. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be sav'd*⁵.

¹ Tit. ii. 11.² Hosea x. 5.³ John x. 36.⁴ Ib.

v. 37.

⁵ John iii. 16, 17.

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When the apostle offers his grateful acknowledgment on the behalf of the church of *Corinth*, for the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, communicated to them, to enlighten and confirm them in the doctrine of Christ, it is evidently render'd to the Father. *I thank my God always --- for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enrich'd by him in all utterance and in all knowledge*¹. In a word, all the spiritual blessings of the gospel-kingdom are ascrib'd to the Father, for which a tribute of praise is expressly directed to him. *Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath bless'd us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [or things] in Christ*².

But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory. This victory is the effect of free favour, and springs from undeserved goodness. The apostle, having represented sin and righteousness as two different masters, giving contrary orders, tells the *Romans*, *that being made free as christians from sin, and becoming servants to God, they had, or ought to have, their fruit unto holiness, and the end would*

¹ 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. ² Eph. i. 3.

*be everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*¹. This is express'd with the greatest strength, and variety of expression by the same writer. *But not as the offence so also is the free-gift, for if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many*². *For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ*³. *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*⁴. Who giveth us the victory, a pledge of it in shedding on us the Holy Ghost, and a right to it by promise, which, because of the certainty of its accomplishment, is express'd in this manner.

Who giveth us the victory who are Gentile or Jewish converts, and influenc'd to the obedience of faith. It is plain, that this writer speaks here of a victory over death by a glorious and blessed resurrection. *But every*

¹ Rom. vi. 23. ² Rom. v. 15. χάρισμα, ἢ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ (ver. 16. τὸ δῶγμα) ἐν χάριτι --- ἐπιβίωσιν.
³ Ver. 17. ⁴ Ver. 20. ὑπερπερισσεύει.

man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's¹, his true members and faithful disciples, at his coming. When in answer to the difficulty that he starts, With what body do they come? he replies that there will be a change; he deduces the necessity of that alteration, since flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and when he speaks of the change of those who survive, 'tis probable he has a respect to the surviving saints; since he says, That their corruptible shall put on incorruption, and their mortal shall put on immortality: not that all shall not rise, for he had asserted, before he mentions the order; Christ the first fruits, afterward those which are Christ's; that as in or thro' Adam all die, even so in or thro' Christ shall all be made alive²: but all shall not have a compleat victory over death, by a resurrection to a glorious immortality. This is the privilege of those only, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour. To others, who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath: tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

¹ Ver. 23. ² Ver. 22.

Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, *thro' our Lord Jesus Christ*¹. *The word made flesh, or appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh*² by a mission from the Father, sustain'd the character of a *Saviour*. And when he entred upon his publick office, was *anointed* by the descent of the spirit: in consequence whereof he deliver'd the doctrine or words which he receiv'd from the Father³, and wrought the works for confirmation of that doctrine, which his Father sent him to do. His life was perfectly without blemish, and unstain'd: he *knew no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth*. And therefore death, and the prince of this world, could not have any rightful claim of power over him: but he chearfully and willingly suffer'd, as the Father gave him command, *The cup that my Father giveth me to drink, shall not I drink? And that the world might know that he loved the Father*. For which cause God rais'd him up, and as a reward gave him all power in heaven and earth, and made him *Prince*, as well as *Saviour*, to confer eternal life on his sincere

¹ *Rom. ii. 7.* ² *John i. 14.* *Rom. viii. 3.* ³ *John xiv. 10:*
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disciples, to whom he had before promis'd in his Father's name, that they should not die for ever ; but that he would raise them up at the last day. This method was highly fit. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings ¹. He partook of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy, defeat him that had the power of death, i. e. of bringing in death by being the instrument of introducing sin, that is the devil: And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. In this way he became a merciful and faithful high priest. Hereby there is a conspicuous and an agreeable harmony in the government and dispensation of God. By man came death, by man came the resurrection of the dead; in Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive. By one lapse, and that a gratification of a sensual appetite, death reign'd over all: by one remarkable instance of obedience in suffering death, the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one,

¹ Heb. ii. 10. 14.

Jesus Christ. Thus it is in the highest wisdom, that God giveth us the victory over death *through our Lord Jesus Christ.* I come now to the fourth head.

IV. To evince that this is a just foundation of thanks. *But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory.*

Every favour which we receive from God, and which must be free and undeserv'd as coming from him, is a just ground of praise; but to have *death* vanquish'd, which is our most formidable enemy, which palls every pleasure, and sickens every enjoyment, and throws a dark shade over the brightest scene, calls for our highest praises. This victory in some degree is of the greatest extent; *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;* and consider'd in reference to a resurrection to eternal life, 'tis not confin'd to the *Jews*, but reaches to the *Gentiles*; to *all* who believe, and are influenc'd by that faith, in the prevailing bent of mind, and general conduct of life, to a sincere and constant course of obedience. *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for*
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honour, and glory, and immortality; he will render eternal life¹. And glory honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God. This victory that the saints shall obtain over death by a glorious and happy resurrection, will be the greatest benefit, that they are capable of receiving; and therefore the expectation and hope of it, justly and reasonably demand the highest praise. The change which shall pass upon their bodies will be greatly to their advantage: for of *corruptible*, liable to disorder, pain, and death, they will be *incorruptible*, no more obnoxious to disease, and dissolution; of *dishonourable*², being depriv'd of the vestment of glory, which *Adam* in a state of innocence was cloath'd with, they will be rais'd in glory³: of *weak*, infirm, liable to fatigue and lowness of spirits, and so less fitted for activity, they will be rais'd in *power*, undecaying, active, ever sprightly, and vigorous: of *natural*⁴ or rather *animal*, which requires by its make, continual recruits of food and sleep, and in which there are many propensities (as natural affection, &c.) that are suitable, and proper to this state, and would not

¹ Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9. ² Εὐαγγελία. ³ Εὐ δόξῃ. ⁴ Ψυχικόν.

be agreeable to the other, they will be rais'd *spiritual*, every way suited to the heavenly state. With such glorious bodies shall the saints enter into the possession of perfect, compleat, and eternal happiness in the celestial inheritance. *Thanks* be to God, who hath given us the expectation of such a victory over death, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Having thus explain'd the words, I shall draw five inferences from them, and conclude.

1. From what has been said, we may infer the malignity of sin. Sin in itself is deform'd, contrary to the reason, and fitness of things; the parent of disorder, and confusion in the creation of God, the cause of uneasiness, and distress in the conscience, and *the sting of death*. Sin has given rise to death, that king of terrors which has made such havock among men, and so much sullied this part of the works of God. It has given original to death, and all the melancholy train of miseries which attend it. Its sting is venomous and deadly, and it is not only the

parent of death, but it arms our enemy with terror, and makes him more formidable and frightful. When therefore we have any instance of mortality, but especially on the decease of a friend, we should raise in our minds the quickest and warmest resentments against sin, and form the most fix'd and determin'd resolution to exert our utmost vigour to destroy and ruin its power.

2. The subject of this discourse, will lead us to a clear apprehension of the benefit and advantage which we receive by the christian revelation. If we allow the light of nature to be capable of informing us in an extensive manner, of our duties to God, others, and ourselves; if (attended to) it could discover that the wise and holy governor of the world, will finally distinguish the pious and virtuous, from the irreligious and vicious; and in such manner as to make appear that the one made a wise, the other a foolish choice; yet it could never with clearness and certainty, open to us what the first state, and original constitution of things were, and in what precise manner, agreeably thereto, he would govern this part of his creation, what sanction he had expressly annex'd to his law,
and

and that death should be the wages of sin. And yet I cannot suppose but that every one will own that the knowledge of these, if God should think proper to discover them, would be of great advantage and highly beneficial: especially since in the doctrine of the gospel there is not only a discovery of pardon, and forgiveness of sins, or in other words, of remitting and cancelling the sanction of death annex'd to the divine law; but also of the manner in which this is effected, which will appear, the more carefully it is consider'd, to be more evidently congruous and agreeable to the wisdom of God. The distinction that the great governour of the world will make in another state, between the righteous and the wicked, which the light of nature can discover, cannot be apprehended in any considerable particulars, but only in general. And therefore such a view is not likely to have a wide and extensive influence, to the steady practice of religious virtue, in circumstances of strong and great temptation. The rewards of the righteous (if pure rewards without any other state of trial could ever be discover'd by the light of nature to belong to imperfect virtue) could not by that light be discern'd to have their commencement in a
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resurrection. But the christian revelation discovers to us, with great perspicuity and distinctness, the most remarkable, and important circumstances of the future state; tells us with clearness, the bodies of the risen saints shall be chang'd, and made active, glorious, and immortal; and that after this *they* shall enter into a compleat, consummate, and eternal happiness in the heavenly inheritance, and never be expos'd more to danger by a new state of tryal. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out*¹. If these discoveries, which the doctrine of Christ makes with peculiar clearness, and certainty, are of any considerable advantage to influence, and support men in the pursuit and practice of religious virtue, under all the difficulties of this state (and this surely will be granted by all reasonable, and considerate persons) then the christian religion must be allow'd to be worthy of all acceptance, and of our steddiest and most constant regard.

3. From this discourse may be deduc'd the unreasonable conduct of those, who would make the observation of the law of *Moses*,

¹ Rev. iii. 12.

universally binding upon the *Gentile* as well as *Jewish* converts.

The fondness that the *Jews* had for the rites of the *Mosaic* dispensation, made many of them, when they had embrac'd christianity, desirous of bringing the *Gentile* christians under an obligation of observing them. And the false apostles took occasion from thence to give great disturbance to the churches, that *Paul*, the apostle of the *Gentiles*, had plented. That at *Corinth* there was a faction rais'd against him by their means, is evident. *For such are the false apostles, deceitful workers. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. Are they Hebrews? so am I¹. The unreasonableness, and folly of this their zeal will undeniably appear from the words of our text. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. The law of Moses curses every one that continueth not in all things which are written therein: It is weak through the flesh, and incapable of giving justification of life: it threatens death to a wilful breach of any of its laws, and binds death the faster, upon those who are under it. It is therefore*

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 13. 18. 22.

with the highest reason, that the apostle *Paul*, so constantly and bravely opposes the imposition of it upon the *Gentile* christians. And that *Peter*, when there was a debate on this subject, addressing to the elders and the apostles, says, *Now therefore why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we Jews shall be saved, even as they* ¹ the *Gentile* converts,

4. The victory that God giveth us over death *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, should assuage and abate our sorrow for departed friends. This is the improvement that the apostle himself makes of this doctrine; *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not* ², in an immoderate and indecent manner, *even as others, the heathens who have no hope of a resurrection. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. Wherefore comfort one another with these words,* A moderate grief for our deceased friend, whose death gave occasion for this discourse,

¹ *Acts* xv. 10.

² *1 Thes.* iv. 13, 14, 18.

will be allow'd by all who knew him, to be proper and decent; his character, which, because generally known, needs not to be greatly enlarged upon, requires and demands it.

Mr. *Thomas Hollis* was descended of religious parents. His father, who was eminent for piety, and good works, instill'd early into him, as well as his other children, principles of religion, which soon, and in his youthful age, made a proper impression, and had their intended and desir'd effect: for when he was a young man, he made a publick profession of Christ, and join'd himself to this society, of which he has been a member about fifty years. The sense he had of the obligation he was under to this, and of the advantages that arise from complying with it, made him ever press it upon others, and recommend it to their practice. He was careful to observe attentively his own conduct, and for that reason wrote memoirs in shorthand for many years, which he afterwards committed to the flames. The love of the scriptures soon appear'd. When business invited him abroad into *France*, and other places, at that time a young man, the *New Testament*

Testament was his constant companion. Public worship, and in this society, to which he stood related, he steddily and constantly attended, and was seldom or rarely absent, nothing but sickness, or something very extraordinary, preventing him. His respect to ministers for their works sake, was great and unusual. He was pleas'd with their conversation, and especially when it was instructive. He never allow'd himself to speak more severely of any of the performances of preachers, than that he should not choose to sit constantly under such a ministry. He was very steddy in family-worship, and regular in the time of performing it, to which the smallness of his family did not a little contribute.

He was, when in business, constant and regular; and so good a manager of his time, that he always redeem'd a part of it, for the improvement of his mind by reading. He was careful in the choice of his books, and would often say, that the little leisure he had, made it necessary. Towards the close of his life he told me, that he had laid aside the reading of such books, as requir'd great attention, and contented himself with those, which were wrote in a more easy and practical manner, and were fitted to raise and excite devotion.

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How well he behav'd to his relations, you who are his relatives, are perfectly apprised: with what prudence and faithfulness he advis'd in any affairs of consequence, and with what tenderness, and compassion he receiv'd the news of any distress, that in the course of providence did arise to any of you. His publick-spiritedness was remarkable, and uncommon. Distant and remote countries, as well as *Britain*, will miss him, and lament his death. The communities to which he stood related, receiv'd instances of his distinguish'd bounty: and what makes this part of his character the more shining, is, that his goodness was not confin'd or restrain'd entirely to a party.

Two years before his death, feeling his strength to abate, he liv'd in a constant expectation of his dissolution. In his last illness, before his senses fail'd him, desirous only that his relations would do what might satisfy themselves, and not expressing any solicitude about the event, he discover'd a calmness and serenity of mind, which was agreeable to all about him. When one of his relations put him in mind of the pleasure, that he must have from a review of his well-spent life, tho' it was in the scripture scheme no foundation for

a claim of merit, he express'd his satisfaction, and approv'd the distinction; and to the same relative, in his latest moments, he declar'd his affection to all his relations, the church in particular to which he stood related, and to all the churches of Christ. Thus died this good man; thus he drop'd like a shock of corn fully ripe, in the seventy second year of his age.

And now you who are nearly related to him guard against excess of sorrow. He was lent to you, and the world, and continu'd as a blessing the general period of human life, and was prepar'd for the other world. The best use that you can make of this melancholy providence, is to imitate his virtues, and follow his example, and especially in beneficence so far as your ability and circumstances will admit.

5. From the victory over death that God giveth us *thro' our Lord Jesus Christ*, let us be prevailed with *to be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*. This is the inference that the apostle himself makes from the words. *Be you therefore, since God giveth us the victory thro'*

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our Lord Jesus Christ, stedfast, and immovable, making use of two words to express the importance of the exhortation, which he recommends; or be you steddly in adhering to the doctrine of Christ, and particularly that of the resurrection; and immovable, not carry'd away by the insinuation, and artful methods of false teachers, always abounding in the work of the Lord, in a religious, holy, and virtuous course of life, walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, forasmuch as you know¹ by the christian revelation, that your labour is not in vain, by which more is intended than express'd. For as much as you know that there will be a glorious resurrection, to a perfect and eternal happiness in the celestial kingdom, where will be enjoy'd pure and spiritual pleasures arising from the immediate presence of God and the Messiah, and the society of angels and perfected saints, without the fear of an abatement, or a period to be put to them.

¹ Col. i. 10.

